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7-11-2015

Student Confidence in Applying for Post Graduate Training Before and After an Elective Course

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Abstract

Introduction

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Recommended Citation

Kessler, Tiffany; Callen, Erin; Appeddu, Lisa; Montarella, Kristin; Brooks, Krista; Walker, Cheri; and Anderson, Jamie, "Student Confidence in Applying for Post Graduate Training Before and After an Elective Course" (2015). *Faculty Articles & Research*. 18. https://dc.swosu.edu/cop_pp_articles/18

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Oklahoma State University College of Pharmacy applying for and matching with residencies has declined.

- Two barriers identified by all students included lack of information and confidence in their skills.
- A 16-week, two-hour elective was developed and offered to 2nd and 3rd year pharmacy students in January of 2012 and is... [Read More](#)

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Student Confidence in Applying for Post Graduate Training Before and After an Elective Course



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Introduction

- As residency positions have become more difficult to obtain, the number of students at Southwestern Oklahoma State University College of Pharmacy applying for and matching with residencies has declined.
- Two barriers identified by all students included lack of information and confidence in their skills.
- A 16-week, two-hour elective was developed and offered to 2nd and 3rd year pharmacy students in January of 2012 and is currently offered each Spring semester.

Objectives

- Evaluate the impact of this course on student awareness of post graduate training opportunities.
- Evaluate the impact of this course on student confidence in their ability to prepare materials and demonstrate the skills necessary for the residency application process and to secure a post graduate position.

Methods

Population

- All second and third year students enrolled in the post graduate preparatory elective between 2012 and 2014.

Survey Instrument

- Written pre-course voluntary survey:** 13 questions regarding student baseline characteristics, educational background (Section 1), and 13 questions regarding career goals, reasons for doing post graduate training, knowledge of post graduate training opportunities, and confidence in a variety of skills needed to secure a post graduate position (Section 2).
- Written post-course voluntary survey:** Same questions as Section 2 above.
- Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) was used to evaluate student knowledge and confidence regarding post graduate opportunities and skills associated with the application process.

Statistical Methods

- Pre-elective and post-elective data was analyzed using dependent t-tests to compare the means of self-reported changes in confidence.
- Cronbach's alpha was utilized to determine the internal reliability of the Likert scale used in our survey.
- Statistical analysis was performed using IBM® SPSS® software (version 22).
- Approved by the University's Institutional Review Board.

Baseline Demographics

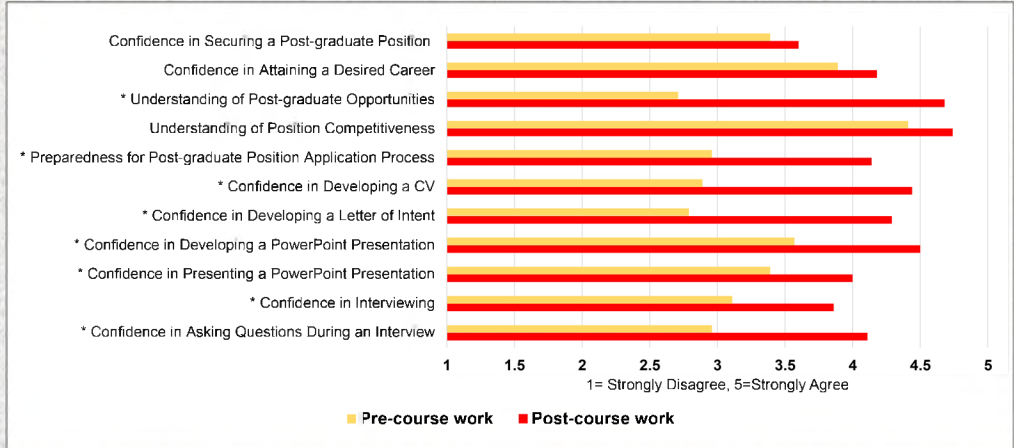
Characteristic	n, (%)
Gender	
Male	13 (46.4)
Female	15 (53.6)
Year	
P2	8 (28.6)
P3	20 (71.4)
Age	
18-21	5 (17.9)
22-25	15 (53.6)
26-29	5 (17.9)
30-34	2 (7.1)
≥35	1 (3.6)
Marital Status	
Single	22 (78.6)
Married	6 (21.4)
Children	
Yes	1 (3.6)
No	27 (96.4)
Organizational Involvement	
Yes	25 (89.3)
No	3 (10.7)
Previous degree	
Yes	13 (46.4)
No	15 (53.6)
GPA	
2.51-3.0	1 (3.6)
3.01-3.5	9 (32.1)
3.51-4.0	18 (64.3)
Previous pharmacy experience	
Community	21 (75)
Hospital	9 (32.1)
None	1 (3.6)
Became interested in post grad training	
Prior to admission	3 (10.7)
P1	9 (32.1)
P2	14 (50)
P3	2 (7.1)

Author Disclosure

Authors of this presentation have nothing to disclose concerning possible financial or personal relationships with commercial entities that may have a direct or indirect interest in the subject matter of this presentation.



Student Pre- and Post-Elective Survey Mean Responses



Results

- 28 of 34 students enrolled in the course completed both the pre- and the post-elective surveys.
- Overall, the majority of students were female, had a GPA >3.51, and had a high level of organizational involvement.
- Cronbach's alpha was 0.789 for pre-course work survey and 0.831 for post-course work survey which indicates that our survey instrument utilized a reliable Likert scale.
- Independent t-test comparing mean changes between years showed no difference ($P > 0.30$), so P2 and P3 data were combined for statistical analysis.
- Data with a statistically significant change ($p < 0.01$) included understanding of post-graduate opportunities, confidence in ability to apply for positions and ask questions during the interview, and development of a curriculum vitae, letter of intent, and PowerPoint presentation.

Discussion

- Student confidence was measured which may not translate into actual ability to complete these tasks.
- Perceived knowledge of competitiveness of post graduate training prior to the course may have been inflated and therefore not been adequately measured.

Conclusions

- Our findings indicate that the elective course had a positive impact on our students. This correlates with various instructors' observations of student growth in these areas during the semester. This elective course can provide a framework for other colleges of pharmacy seeking to develop innovative methods to improve students' confidence in pursuing post graduate training.